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AUTHOR Grimaldi, Ettore P.; Garrett, Philip R.
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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a working framework for a controlled change of instructional practices within a community college. A methodology for the training of students and faculty in the evaluation of curriculum and instruction is presented: (1) establish a positive rationale for evaluation within a context of meaningful philosophy; (2) determine a method for forming a committee and how the committee will be composed; (3) conduct a colloquium for the committee to study concepts of research, curriculum-building and evaluation; (4) study and disseminate the research literature on curriculum-building, evaluation models, and their application; (5) create the evaluative format cooperatively; (6) articulate the component aspects of the format, listing explicit behaviors, standards for judgment, and rationale for the criteria; (7) publish the format package for review, and allow sufficient time for assimilation and reformation; (8) reformulate course objectives after a teacher-controlled trial period; (9) determine procedures for the committee to perpetuate itself for continuous operation of the process. (Author/RN)

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Developing a Process Model for
Student Reformation of Curriculum and Instruction

Ettore P. Grimaldi and Philip R. Garrett

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Mr. Grimaldi is Associate Professor of Psychology,
Southwest College, Chicago City Colleges.

Mr. Garrett is Assistant Professor of Education,
Northeastern Illinois University.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a working framework for a controlled change of instructional practices within a community college setting. Emphasis is placed on the development of a methodology for the training of students and faculty in the evaluation of instruction. Evaluation is viewed as a natural feature of the educational process and an integral component of the ongoing educational process.

Contemporary curriculum-building trends have been embroiled in increasing confrontation between the students and teachers. Students argue that the curriculum is irrelevant; teachers argue that the students have not engaged in enough formal education to be competent judges about the nature of the curriculum. Students want pragmatic, current programs and credit for involvement in field projects, and the teachers contend that this approach lacks the organizational overview and control of a consistent, common denominator of learning for all. Students protest that they want the right to influence the hiring and firing of the faculty as well as to dictate curriculum content; however, the teachers respond that the students lack the knowledge, and therefore, the competence to judge or evaluate quality in teaching or in program.

It will be the intent of this paper to show that there is no real incompatibility in the contrast of these positions: students are seeking means to be included in the formulation of curriculum and instruction, and teachers are seeking cooperative approaches in which they can exert the influence of their professional standards and cultivated norms of excellence.

The transition from protesting to cooperative involvement can indeed be positive and controlled by the professionals. The denial of involvement due to lack of experience and knowledge can be reversed by methodical orientation of the non-professional to the professional's norms and standards. Indeed, that teachers can help teach the non-professional how to assume the tasks of the professional is done continuously within the content of teacher training programs. The conceptualization of curriculum-building and evaluation are core components of such programs..

The development of a process model for student evaluation of curriculum is contingent on establishing a construct of curriculum within which evaluation is a component concept. The rationale for determining a systematic approach is rooted in the perception of curriculum as a behavioral operation.

Curriculum is a dynamic, participatory process which defines education as a set of interactive experiences which occur within the school environment between the student and teacher in order to affect change from an antecedent status to a consequent status for both the teacher and the student.

As a dynamic process, curriculum affords experiences which are active, continuously changing and moving toward new dispositions and statuses for the student and teacher.

Curriculum is participatory in that it affords a reciprocal, mutually-purposeful and mutually-modifying, goal-oriented relationship between the student and teacher.

Viewed as a process, curriculum embraces a comprehensive range of options in method, strategy, and performance approaches. The identification of all the skills of the teaching art enables the teacher to flexibly utilize any option which will optimally serve his perception of the student's learning needs. Furthermore, the articulation of these options will enable the teacher to modify his approaches to those operations consistent with the student's perceived objective.

In this construct of curriculum, education is viewed as the contact or communion between the teacher and the student within the school community.

The experiences are interactive because they involve both the student and the teacher, although not necessarily on an equal or equitable basis. However,

the relationship affords both the opportunity to shape each other's behavior in an effort to promote mutual attainment of the goals evolved within that particular educational context.

The experiences, per se, are the actual points of contact in the relationship in the school community. The points of contact become specific events of interaction with the elements of the environment.

The environment of the classroom or school community is a segment of the contact or communion possible within the macro-environment of the culture to which the school belongs. This environment, therefore, supports varying levels of interaction between the macro-structure and the micro-structure in respect to the student and teacher perceptions of goals. The student and teacher must relate to each other within the context of subjective perceptions, institutional perceptions and cultural perceptions.

The student in this construct of curriculum can be viewed as a teacher among teachers in that he is influencing modifications of the professional agent by reasons of the reactions or responses he makes to the teacher's performance. By corollary, the teacher is also a learner among learners, in that he plans and adopts functional variations of program based on assessed need for change in the instructional situation.¹

Change incorporates any conceivable cognitive, affective or motor task that can be identified as an objective.

A student's antecedent status refers to his starting point in the relationship, or his preliminary situation resulting from all the past history of his experiences. Just so, a teacher's antecedent status may be the starting point of his knowledge of the subject matter as well as his repertoire of teaching

skills. Once the student and the teacher engage each other in a reciprocal relationship in the classroom or the school community, each develops new perceptions of the consequent status. This end point of the relationship entails the identification of new goals for each - for the teacher, perhaps new skills to be incorporated within his repertoire, and for the student, perhaps new areas of content more relevant to his needs.

The rationale for considering curriculum as a process, as opposed to a prescribed body of course content, is that the process approach is actively committed to joint curriculum-building. Rather than making a strong commitment to established curriculum procedures, this cooperative development of curriculum is limited only by the scope of the contractual agreement between the two parties in the mutual attainment of their goals.

The recognition that the process of shaping a curriculum is founded on mutually-purposeful goals establishes the fact that both the teacher and the student have rights. The teacher has the right to determine areas of knowledge as the specialist in that field; however, the student has a right to determine the appropriateness of that knowledge for his own development. Each accomplishes the attainment of his own rights when he can also provide positive feedback to help the other attain his rights. The teacher experiences the success of positive feedback when he has incorporated the views of the student. The student experiences the success of positive feedback when he has helped the teacher achieve his professional commitment to teach.²

The view that curriculum is a process acknowledges the reality that curriculum is as it is used; that is, that from the vast bodies of knowledge that exist, the real curriculum consists mainly of those portions abstracted

for the points of contact between the student and his teacher. The teacher has prior awareness of the body of knowledge, but the student may have a different awareness of the applicability of the knowledge as he sees it. In the spirit of his times, the student may interpret the body of knowledge with a unique sensitivity for its relevance in his own accommodation to the contemporary world. The past history of academics is purposeful only if it facilitates adaptation to the changing social order. Just as the teacher has the prerogative to respect the contributions of past thought, the student has the prerogative to judge the usefulness of that thought for the now-world he lives in. The teacher who can reconstruct the body of knowledge to incorporate the contemporary, and furthermore, assimilate the knowledge to allow new synthesis, will be best prepared to receive the response of the currently-attuned student. The curriculum becomes a meaningful, relevant process, not merely because it is shaping and adjusting the most appropriate fabric of the knowledge, but also because it allows each the integrity of thinking and the respect of his individuality.

Respect for each other's individuality and thinking entails a reliance on cooperative involvement. Just as early colonists resented "taxation without representation," students are penalized by imposition of curriculum without collective negotiation. The respectful act of finding out what concerns and interests the student will promote positive responses. The reactions to this inquiry -- interest, attentiveness, enthusiasm, independent study, group cooperativeness, diligence to work -- will promote the teacher's positive response to his effort. The teacher who has realized successful communication will most probably commit himself more deeply to his own purpose of teaching.

The willingness of the teacher to accept himself as a learner among learners and to respect the student as a teacher among teachers is the prelude to developing a functional philosophy of purposeful educational change, within which both the student and the teacher have access to mutually-advantageous rewards for their commitment. The procedure for developing a joint curriculum-building process is founded on the premise that both the individual student's rights and the individual teacher's rights have been observed. The procedures of how the student can evaluate the instruction in order to influence positive curriculum-building and of how the teacher can relate to the students and inquire about the nature of his interests are hereafter to be listed and amplified.³

1. Establish a positive rationale for evaluation within a context of meaningful philosophy.
2. Determine a method for forming a committee and how the committee will be composed.
3. Conduct a colloquium for the committee to study concepts of research, curriculum-building and evaluation.
4. Study and disseminate the research literature on curriculum-building, evaluation models, and their application.
5. Create the evaluative format cooperatively.
6. Articulate the component aspects of the format, listing explicit behaviors, standards for judgment, and rationale for the criteria.
7. Publish the format package for review, and allow sufficient time for assimilation and reformation.
8. Reformulate course objectives after a teacher-controlled trial period.

9. Determine procedures for the committee to perpetuate itself for continuous operation of the process.

- 1.0. ESTABLISH A POSITIVE RATIONALE FOR EVALUATION WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF MEANINGFUL PHILOSOPHY

- 1.1. Since change is continuous, it is essential that philosophy embrace the notion of change as an on-going force which can be subjected to controls in order to affect purposeful and meaningful direction.
- 1.2. Controlled and purposeful change can be implemented most effectively when the ventures or efforts are based on collaborative involvement. Cooperative effort should be the right of all participants in the total educational enterprise, in order to insure just representation and to safeguard individual integrity.
- 1.3. Evaluation occurs informally among the student body already. To deny informal evaluations is to deny a human trait. Pragmatic acceptance of the tendency to evaluate, together with the acknowledgement of the student's right to be involved in the program that affects his future, should lead to a formalization of the process and an inclusion of the student in the component of this aspect of managing and building the comprehensive educational enterprise.
- 1.4. The teacher has the right to be aware of the explicit standards and criteria by which his performance is to be judged. The specification of the traits, skills, competencies, and

experience to be displayed by the teacher will foster professional growth. As a professional it would be inexcusable for the teacher to tolerate incompetence and ineptitude. Because "no man is an island" each teacher is committed not only to improving himself, but also to elevating the standards of performance of his colleagues.

- 1.5. Positive evaluation is constructive in that it re-directs the energies of the people involved to improving program, re-constructing program, and planning new program, rather than the destructive nature of fixing blame. The outcome of such positive inquiry should be new awareness of the option to be pursued for conception of process, strategy, or approach. The aspect of paramount importance in this conception of a process approach to evaluating is the notion of self-fulfilling change: with all the alternative views exposed, expectancies listed, standards and criteria detailed, and new objectives analyzed, the awareness becomes the catalyst for change before estrangement ensues. The insight and perception of a goal which is personally beneficial, and which may also be mutually-advantageous, become an incentive to re-direct efforts for purposeful change. Explication of the inquiry procedures and penetrating clarity of all the news becomes the essential determiner of self-directed effort.

2.0. DETERMINE A METHOD FOR FORMING A COMMITTEE AND HOW THE COMMITTEE WILL BE COMPOSED.

2.1. Committee membership should be composed of both students and faculty, maintaining an awareness of the conflict of having a large enough number to achieve more equitable representation, and yet a small enough number to allow effective interaction. Because the faculty will have advantages, being more highly trained, educated, and informed, their influence should depend on informed and enlightened persuasiveness rather than plurality control. Furthermore, the faculty is a continuing body in the school community as opposed to the transiency of the student body. The actual ratio of representation is dependent on negotiation; however, the important principle to be observed is that of maintaining sustained membership for the students and rotating membership for the faculty. A deliberate imbalance of student members to faculty members, plus the provision for long-term membership for students and short-term membership for faculty will preserve the primary purpose of promoting student participation. Some consideration might be given to the committee being composed of one student for every 500 people enrolled in the school community. Whatever that total number of representatives happens to be, the faculty representation may constitute a one-third ratio. Thus, for a student body of 4500, there would be nine student members and three faculty members. Certainly the ratio of representation

should be subject to adjustment for varying circumstances.

However, it would seem to preserve student longevity and sustained participation if the student members served a two-year term, while faculty members served only a one-year term and allowing renewed membership on a continuing cycle.

- 2.2. The composition of the committee should serve to compensate for the remoteness and isolation of the students not involved in the organization and operation of the comprehensive school community. Consequently, some attention must be given to incorporating extension division and part-time students as well as daytime/full-time student body. Further regard should be given to making the membership representative of the levels possible within the total program. Thus, the student faction may be composed of full-time and part-time freshmen, sophomores, etc.

3.0. CONDUCT A COLLOQUIUM FOR THE COMMITTEE TO STUDY CONCEPTS OF RESEARCH, CURRICULUM-BUILDING, AND EVALUATION.

- 3.1. One of the most beneficial adjuncts of developing a colloquium for the student representatives is not merely the development of skill in research, but also the familiarization with a body of knowledge that enables the student to competently engage the faculty in the discourse of academic issues. Being able to locate information, synthesize, and evaluate data are merely precursors to discussing the problems of improving instruction with faculty members already trained in the intricacies of the

curriculum-building and evaluating process.

- 3.2. A study colloquium will function effectively and continuously if the basic managerial duties are expedited by a facilitator, a full-time specialist functioning in a service role to orient the students to research skills. This person shall not be a faculty member, but rather a technician employed to objectively assist the students in their quest for information and awareness of instructional methods. The facilitator will devote his energies to serving the students need for preparation. He shall exert no control over the objectives of the committee or exercise any authority over any representative. His sole function is to guide and to advise within the limited frame of reference for which he was hired. The facilitator is to be construed as a research assistant, responsible only to the student membership of the committee.
- 3.3. Involvement in the committee will probably be effective and continuous so long as it constitutes an educative experience and satisfactory activity for all representatives of the committee. In order to promote and heighten the immediacy and the enthusiasm for creating effective working relationships, it would be beneficial for students to earn course credit for the colloquium. Participation in the colloquium would be a learning experience in a very real and concrete sense, exposing the student to usable skills, new concepts, and opportunity for dynamic action. So also, faculty members should be accorded

released time to pursue committee involvement, or should be given extra salary to compensate them for effort expended.

- 3.4. Sustained and effectual function of the committee and the colloquium is dependent on productive action. Cutting time lags, eliminating delays, expediting search for information, distributing data, and promoting continuous operations are contingent on the availability of funds. The students should have access to funds for the acquisition and dissemination of materials, the employment of short-term consultants, and the payment of incidental expenses incurred by the committee members. Thus the control of the funds and their disbursement should be maintained by the student faction of the committee. The student faction would be responsible, of course, for publication of regular reports concerning the usage of the funds. Furthermore, the committee should have access to adequate clerical help to insure continuity of operation.

4.0 STUDY AND DISSEMINATE THE RESEARCH LITERATURE ON CURRICULUM-BUILDING, EVALUATION MODELS, AND THEIR APPLICATION.

- 4.1. The essential purpose of publishing a newsletter on all the findings and research of the committee is not merely to inform the school community, but is also to educate all school citizens and laymen of the civic area in the process of building free and open exchange. The newsletter, therefore, is not merely a house organ in the school community but is also for the lay community. This newsletter can constitute a forum

through which all views can be represented. The thorough and complete reporting of the exchange will contribute to the process of building a cooperative understanding by giving verbatim transcripts, as well as by stating the rationales for decision and judgments. Thus, in a very real sense, the newsletter constitutes a log, a journal, a primer, and a how-to-do-it history book.

5.0 CREATE THE EVALUATIVE FORMAT COOPERATIVELY.

5.1. Consensus of thought can be sought and response can be ascertained by presenting all pertinent views to a referendum of the school public. Whether or not he chooses to exercise his franchise, every citizen of the school community should have an opportunity to have his opinions and reactions accounted for.

6.0 ARTICULATE THE COMPONENT ASPECTS OF THE FORMAT, LISTING EXPLICIT BEHAVIORS, STANDARDS FOR JUDGMENT, AND RATIONALE FOR THE CRITERIA.

6.1. The avowed purpose of designing a model for evaluation of instruction is to influence positive change. Through the educative experience of students involved in learning about the strategies and problems of instruction, and of teachers engaged in learning about student needs and expectations, purposeful change will already have occurred. With this procedure they both will have influenced each other's thinking before any format is finalized. The process of

assimilating diverse views and synthesizing them constitutes a dynamic procedure of adjustment and re-adjustment of thinking. Positive change of views will have been influenced before any concrete format is produced. Furthermore, teaching and learning performance will have been changed throughout the process.

- 6.2. Because people tend to respond to clearly-conceived definitions of how they can act in order to get positive feedback of success from the satisfied observer, both teachers and students will adopt new understandings and practice new teaching and learning approaches when they are fully aware of how they can earn recognition. The essential significance of this process is that this dynamic adjustment will generally occur before any formal evaluation has been started.
- 6.3. The collaboratively-derived explication of desired teaching performances allows the teacher to exert his influence on the conception of desired practice, as well as to respond to a cooperatively-devised specification of those practices. The teacher and the learner can freely respond to adopting those practices which will earn positive feedback. Again, it must be stressed that the process enables positive reformation of instruction without the introduction of any formal evaluation. Thus, the continuous publication of all the contributions of thought and the reactions to that thought, plus the formations

of all the items that specify the nature of the practices desired, constitutes the absolute requisite for the process to work. The free exchange of ideas and the clearly-stated decisions of desired practices universally communicated are the pivotal requirements for controlled change.

7.0. PUBLISH THE FORMAT PACKAGE FOR REVIEW AND ALLOW SUFFICIENT TIME FOR ASSIMILATION AND REFORMATION.

7.1. Universal distribution of the format will amount to meaningless paperwork if opportunity for positive change is not afforded. Worthwhile and purposeful change cannot be expected to be immediate. Therefore, sufficient time must be allowed to permit the faculty to experiment with the new areas of performance, to research and to modify their practices, to adopt revised or augmented skills, and finally, to accomplish mastery of the performances.

8.0. REFORMULATE COURSE OBJECTIVES AFTER A TEACHER-CONTROLLED TRIAL PERIOD.

8.1. After the teacher has had the opportunity to explore and master the new teaching approaches, he and the committee can review the course syllabus with the intent of updating the expression of the stated objectives. Although the process centers on collaborative effort, it must be emphasized that the teacher is accorded the respect and integrity of controlling his own direction for change.

9.0. DETERMINE PROCEDURES FOR THE COMMITTEE TO PERPETUATE FOR CONTINUOUS OPERATION OF THE PROCESS.

- 9.1. The essence of this approach is that it is an educative process as opposed to a formal evaluation procedure. However, since the need for appraisal of a program is patently necessary, the continuous implementation of the process in its cyclic approach will effect curriculum modification. The intent is positive and task-oriented in that it is directed to both evolutionary and revolutionary reconstruction of the program.
- 9.2. As an educative process, this approach is not directed at devising empirical descriptions or measurements of a program at some predetermined end point of operation. This process is channeled toward the rebuilding and redirecting of instructional efforts in a dynamic movement with no temporal end point. Unlike the focus of customary evaluation on the collection of a body of data that may not remain constant by the time the decisions are made, the emphasis here is on the shaping of on-going decision-making in a current of events not expected to remain constant.
- 9.3. Because the process is intended to achieve continuous and dynamic modification, it is essential to incorporate a viable method to infuse new personnel and new ideas. This inclusion of a broader base of the school and social community is going to depend on the potentials that the process has for satisfying perceived needs. The extension

of the process and the expansion of the body of people involved can be accomplished by allowing the study committee to perpetuate and spread its impact in the training of new groups of students in the workings of the committee. However, there is no intent to establish a hierarchy within which only the committee membership constitutes an elite that controls a stratified apprenticeship program; rather, it is an attempt to maintain the process of modification as necessary content for the curriculum of the entire student body. The eventual appointment or election of members to the perpetuated committee will still be by procedures and policies established by the student body. Also, larger numbers of faculty can be brought into the process by offering in-service training about the nature of the process. The students and teachers involved in the observer's practicum will profit not only from the benefits of the improved program, but also from the immediate satisfiers of course credit, recognition, released time, and extra pay.

The implications of this process of curricular modification may allow several other potential applications.

1. The process approach could be extended to the administration of the entire school enterprise, including the aspects of planning, staffing, coordinating, and budgeting. Furthermore, the process approach might be considered as an intervention

procedure to investigate and mediate cases of inadequate customizing of the curriculum to meet individual student needs.

2. The process may be applied to the constructing of the school enterprise as a corporate venture in which the student's tuition payment becomes the share enfranchising him to the right of referendum on all school affairs.
3. The process approach to building and reforming can be taught effectively to any group whose interests should indicate an ability to deal with one's environment. It is entirely possible that the process approach can be structured and adapted even for elementary school pupils.
4. The process approach can be disseminated through the school community into the social community. Citizens would learn not only how to maintain an adjustment of the environmental circumstances affecting their individual welfare but could apply the process to collective welfare. The governance of the community might truly be by the governed.

This process model for student reformation of curriculum and instruction is fundamentally a program devoted to deliberate and purposeful change rather than random and accidental change. Its practicability lies in the fact that it is itself a curriculum - that is, a systematic way of modifying systems. It is realistic because it deals with people as they are rather than hypothetical prototypes; it is orderly because it teaches people to be the prime agents to manipulate their own environment; it is directional because it seeks to accomplish deliberated goals; and, it is humanistic because it depends on training people to effectively interact for their individual and collective benefit. **20**

NOTES

1. Israel Goldiamond, "Justified and Unjustified Alarm over Behavioral Control," in Behavior Disorders: Perspectives and Trends, ed. by Ohmer Milton (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1965), pp. 254 and 257.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 257

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